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DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: APRIL IN GHAZNI: SECURITY CONTINUES TO DEGRADE

Classified By: PRT and Sub-National Governance Director Valerie C. Fowler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (S/REL ISAF) During the month of April, security continued to degrade in Ghazni province, in keeping with the ramping up of the fighting season, and the return of Afghan Taliban and foreign fighters to the province. Enemy attacks mainly focused on patrols, which also highlights the fact that the ANP and new Polish maneuver battalion are getting out onto Highway One and other main supply routes. The political situation in Ghazni remained stable, mainly because Governor Usmani had free reign to pursue his policies without opposition from the still-closed Provincial Council (PC). During the period April 17-22, however, the governor was called to Kabul to face corruption allegations from some Ghazni PC members. The governor appeared to prevail in this second attempt since late January to have him unseated, and returned to Ghazni. Election-related activity began near the end of the month and proceeded peacefully. PRT Ghazni saw visits by a rule of law team from Bagram Air Field, and President Kaczynski from Poland. END SUMMARY.

SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS PRECARIOUS

¶2. (S/REL ISAF) The security situation in Ghazni in April remained precarious, with an overall 19 percent increase in significant acts (SIGACTS) compared to March (76 for April, compared to 64 for March). Trends remain stable, with almost half of April's SIGACTS consisting of small arms fire (SAF) and RPG attacks, and the remainder evenly divided among attempted and actual IED attacks, and mortar and rocket attacks against ANSF and Coalition patrols and static positions.

¶3. (S/REL ISAF) April saw some security developments of particular note. On April 17, a joint ANP-NDS operation in Qarabagh district led to the seizure of over 40 boxes of ammunition and an assortment of machine guns and other small arms. The governor reported that the seized weapons and ammunition were subsequently turned over to the local DIAG Committee. On April 30, a Pakistani suicide bomber was captured alive in Gelan district in Ghazni's troubled Pashtun belt.

¶4. (S/REL ISAF) From April 15 to 29, the fourth rotation of Task Force White Eagle and the corresponding Polish part of the PRT rotated out. Task Force White Eagle Commander COL Rajmund Andrzejczak remained to command White Eagle's fifth rotation -- consisting of elements from Krakow's Sixth Airborne Brigade -- for the next six months. LTCOL Piotr Lewandowski assumed command of the Polish part of the PRT.

POLITICAL SITUATION STABLE, BUT GOVERNOR DISTRACTED

¶5. (S/REL ISAF) During April, the political situation in Ghazni remained stable, mainly because the PC stayed closed, and a number of its members re-located to Kabul. This fact gave Governor Usmani a relatively free hand to pursue his agenda in Ghazni with little to no criticism. The governor was forced to travel to Kabul April 17 to defend himself against allegations lodged against him by Provincial Council accusers and their parliamentary allies. In Kabul, he held meetings with IDLG Director Popal, Pir Sayyed Ahmed Gailani, and President Karzai. The governor expressed concern about the tone and substance of the initial meetings, but became more optimistic after Alokozai tribal leaders from Kandahar and Herat weighed in on his behalf. On April 22, Governor Usmani returned to Ghazni to resume his activities.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITY BEGINS IN GHAZNI CITY

¶6. (S/REL ISAF) After the governor's return to Ghazni, there was a brief flurry of election-related activity. Candidate registration began April 25. The evening before Victory Day (April 28) posters featuring President Karzai and Governor Usmani, and posters of just President Karzai himself, reportedly began to appear in Ghazni City. The governor reported this the following day, but stressed that he had the posters of President Karzai and himself taken down as soon as he was advised they were put up. (COMMENT: It is likely

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that these posters were of a photograph of the governor and President Karzai that was taken during their April 21 meeting in Kabul. END COMMENT.)

¶7. (S/REL ISAF) On Victory Day, a rally in support of Karzai spontaneously developed at the Al-Jihad mosque in Ghazni City, reportedly attended by approximately 2,000 people. Governor Usmani claimed that he had no role in it. The participants read a letter in which they urged President Karzai to declare his candidacy in the August presidential elections, and praised him for the achievements of the previous five years. The governor pointed to an internet page that appeared which featured positive articles on the governor and showed photos of him meeting with Ghazni City residents.

SIGNIFICANT VISITS TO AND EVENTS CONCERNING GHAZNI

¶8. (S/REL ISAF) In April, PRT Ghazni received a number of visitors and was at the center of significant events:

-- On April 3 and 4, Germany's ZDF (Channel 2) News featured three news spots that played throughout Germany and wider Europe to highlight America's soft-power approach to counterinsurgency during celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the NATO alliance.

-- Polish President Lech Kaczynski visited PRT Ghazni on April 8 during a day-long trip to Afghanistan starting in Kabul. During his visit, he told his Afghan interlocutors that Poland would increase its financial assistance to Afghanistan and increase the size of the Polish military contingent in Ghazni. Polish soldiers told Polish journalists visiting with the President that they expected the security situation in Ghazni to worsen in the months leading to the August elections, and as a result of American military operations in Wardak province to the north.

-- From April 25-27, American and British military lawyers from Bagram Air Field delivered a case of Rule-of-Law (RoL)

publications to the PRT for distribution throughout the province. PRT State Rep and the Polish RoL point-of-contact took them to meetings with Ghazni's acting Chief Justice, Chief Prosecutor, and Head of the Huquq (Law/Legal) Department.
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